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## GREAT ARMIES LOCK IN DEATH STRUGGLE IN CRUCIAL BATTLE

German Forces Hurdled on French Lines with Increasing Ferocity, Over 25-mile Front, Near Verdun.

## THOUSANDS IN DEATH HARVEST

French Lines Hold, According to Paris Reports, and End of Gigantic Teuton Drive Is Believed Near.

Special Cable to The Washington Herald.  
Paris, Feb. 24.—The battle of Verdun is growing fiercer hourly. The grim death struggle of nations does not halt for a single minute night or day, as the picked troops of France and Germany are hurled in terrific attack, which succeed each other with bewildering rapidity.

The twenty-five-mile battle line presents the aspect today of a colossal reptile writhing in agony, its configuration twisting back and forth as the alternating successes and reverses of the desperate combatants are reported.

So far, the Germans have been unable to break the French lines at a single point. The utmost they have accomplished has been to drive back the soldiers of the republic on stronger positions after stupendous efforts attended by incredible losses to the attacking troops.

Five Miles from Verdun.

"On the wings," says the midnight official statement, "we have carried back our line, on one side to the rear of Samogneux and on the other side to the south of Ornes."

The Germans, fighting within five miles of the great fortress of Verdun itself, now hold the villages of Brabant-Sur-Meuse, Haumont, Samogneux and Ornes, as well as the entire wooded district to the northwest, north and northeast. They also report the capture of Beaumont and Hierebois.

The French deny that their front has been broken at any point. The retirement has been made in good order, it is stated, and certain points surrendered in order to avoid unnecessary losses. With the Kaiser himself reported on the Verdun battlefield and with the crown prince directing operations, the Germans are launching countless attacks against the French front.

Flight on Twenty-Five-mile Front.

Their unprecedented expenditure of shells continues and the bombardment is continuous on a twenty-five mile front.

The roar of thousands of guns and the shriek of shells continues day and night. Pierce infantry assaults, delivered with what the French describe as "desperate determination," are multiplying.

According to dispatches to London newspapers, the Kaiser is making numerous speeches to his troops as they go into battle, encouraging them to face the deadly fire and inspiring them not to yield until the great French stronghold is in their hands.

Long trains of wounded are being transported back across the German frontier, according to news dispatches to tonight. The German losses are described as enormous.

The French midnight reports tell of "heaps of German bodies left upon the field."

The attack on Verdun is viewed as Germany's final and greatest effort.

Last Desperate Effort.

"It is recognized," says a dispatch, "that if this supreme effort fails, all hope of Germany ending the war victoriously will be abandoned."

The leading military critics declare that the Kaiser chose the present moment to launch an offensive in order to forestall the concerted offensive planned by the allies for the spring, in which the authorities estimate, more than 10,000,000 troops operating in every theater of war, were to co-operate and encompass Germany's immediate downfall.

The loss of the village of Brabant-Sur-Meuse is not regarded here as serious. The attitude taken by all critics here is that the five days' bombardment of the French advance positions must necessarily have shattered in the abandonment of certain sheltered portions of the line. It is felt that the outlook is far from gloomy.

Staying Powers Praised.

Parisians are expressing intense satisfaction in the staying powers of the army. The military critics with one voice point out that if the French troops hold out for a few days longer the German drive will batter itself flat pieces and gradually die away.

News reaching here this evening is that the crown prince is preparing to go to the Balkans and Turkey in the second week of March, indicating that the Germans are not prepared to continue the battle longer than ten days and that they have resolved to win through to Verdun or admit their complete failure by the end of the coming week.

Prize Case to England.

Halifax, N. S., Feb. 24.—Under a ruling handed down in the admiralty court today, the case of the prize steamer Hocking, a ship of United States registry was seized with her cargo of coal between New York and South America.

Kaiser Near Verdun.

London, Feb. 24.—Copenhagen dispatches state that the Kaiser has moved his headquarters to the Verdun region, where he daily makes encouraging speeches to the German soldiers.

## Austrians Halt March When Troops Mutiny

London, Feb. 24.—An exchange dispatch from Durazzo states that the Austrians have abandoned their advance into Albania on account of the impassable roads and mutinous spirit of the Bosnian troops. Albanians under Essad Pasha, it is stated in a Central News cable from Rome, have destroyed a Turkish band near Peto-medi.

## RAIDER SINKS BRITISH SHIP

Prize Taken From Under Very Nose of Cruiser and Blown Up.

## WESTBURN IN DRAMATIC EXPLOIT NEAR CANARIES

Vessel Destroyed Within Three-Mile Limit of Tenerife. While English Cruiser Is Helpless.

Special Cable to The Washington Herald.

London, Feb. 24.—The career of the British steamer Westburn, which put into Tenerife, Canary Islands, yesterday in charge of a German prize crew, has been ended in a highly dramatic manner. She was taken out of the harbor by her German crew today and blown up within sight of a British cruiser, which was lying in wait to recapture her.

Dispatches to the Times indicate that the exploit of the Westburn's German crew was fully as remarkable as that of the prize crew which brought the steamer Appam into Newport News.

With her 200 prisoners taken from various captured vessels on board, the Westburn on her way to Tenerife passed several British and French warships without exciting suspicion. The Times dispatches state that she was under the command of Capt. Badewitz of the German navy.

Upon arrival in Santa Cruz harbor, Commander Badewitz was informed by the Spanish authorities that the Westburn would be returned to her British owners if he decided to intern her.

Blows Up Ship.

A British cruiser, which was lying in the harbor, immediately put out to capture the Westburn if she should attempt to escape. Capt. Badewitz and his seven men started out with the Westburn, but as soon as they were outside the harbor, and while they were still within the three-mile limit they blew the ship up.

Badewitz and his men then returned to port. As the Westburn was still inside Spanish territorial waters the British cruiser was unable to interfere.

A dispatch to the Daily Telegraph from Madrid says that when the Westburn was captured her name was changed to the Moewe, and that the original German raider named the Moewe was then sunk.

This action was taken, the dispatch says, because the original Moewe had been badly damaged.

Shipping men would be glad to know that this is true, for the Moewe now has to her credit fourteen vessels captured or destroyed, all except one of which were British.

## AMSTERDAM IN DANGER FROM RISING WATERS

Unless Dykes Hold City May Be Inundated—Nearby Towns Already Are Devastated.

Special Cable to The Washington Herald.

Amsterdam, Feb. 24.—A strong north-easterly wind is blowing with a heavy fall of snow and is causing considerable anxiety. On account of the flooded condition of the country the situation is critical. In the neighborhood of Amsterdam many of the villages bordering on the flooded region which had been abandoned are now devastated.

The dykes protecting Amsterdam are being subjected to a great strain, and it is feared they may yield at any moment. If they give way Amsterdam itself will be inundated.

Troops are endeavoring to strengthen the dykes to prevent such a disaster.

British Coast Snowbound.

London, Feb. 24.—The British Isles are snowbound today as the result of the worst blizzard in years. The coasts are being lashed by severe gales.

Say Greece Was for Allies.

London, Feb. 24.—That Greece offered to join the allies at the time of the Dardanelles expedition was strongly indicated by interpellations in the house of commons today.

\$50,000 Lost by Fire.

Binghamton, N. Y., Feb. 24.—The H. L. Joyce furniture warehouse was destroyed and the store of the S. Mills Ely Grocery Company was damaged by fire today. The loss was \$50,000.

Will Not Use Tribesmen.

London, Feb. 24.—The British government has decided not to use Zulu and Basuto tribesmen in its armies in Africa. H. J. Tennant, under war secretary, announced today in the house of commons.

## CAPITAL DENOUNCES RIDER ADDING HOUR TO U. S. WORK DAY

Government Officials, Civic Leaders, Merchants and Labor Men Unite In Protesting Surprise Measure.

## CHIEF CLERKS SEE NO SAVING

Many Argue Extra Time Would Decrease Efficiency of Men and Result in Insignificant Saving to Departments, and Bring Hardship to 30,000.

The entire city is aroused in vigorous opposition to the plan approved yesterday by the House Appropriations Committee providing for the addition of an hour to the working day for the vast majority of the more than 30,000 Federal employees in the National Capital.

Vehement denunciation of the proposal and of the manner in which it was introduced was heard last night from all quarters—from government officials, from civic leaders, from merchants, and from officials of all types of local organizations interested in the welfare of the city and its people.

Before yesterday not a word had been heard as to the plan to increase the length of the working day for Washington's Federal employees from seven to eight hours. In a twinkling the matter was presented before the House Committee by Representative William P. Borland, of Missouri, and, before a single citizen had been given an opportunity to express an opinion on the question or voice a word of protest, the committee had endorsed the plan.

Presented as a Rider.

The plan was not offered as a separate proposition, to be considered fully, adequately discussed, and finally acted upon after mature thought had been given the matter by Congress. It was presented in the form of a rider to the legislative, executive and judicial appropriation bill, and was approved before the people of Washington knew of its existence.

A campaign designed to defeat the proposal will be launched this morning by G. Karl Weston, managing editor of The Government Clerk, a local publication devoted to the interests of Federal employees, and John J. Deviny, secretary of the National Association of Civil Service Employees. The Capitol will be visited early this morning and efforts will be made to enlist the support of prominent Senators and Representatives in the fight.

Government officials were almost unanimously last night in ridiculing the assertion of Representative Borland that through the application of the plan the government will be enabled to save approximately \$4,000,000 a year. The chief clerks of nearly all the Federal departments expressed the opinion that very little increase, if any, in the daily amount of work turned out would result from the addition of the extra hour.

These officials pointed out that the addition of an hour would cut down the efficiency of employees to a marked degree. This opinion was shared by business men and civic leaders, and even a number of members of Congress.

However, should the effect of the proposed addition of the hour be the actual turning out of more work than now is

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## Borland Expects His Plan to Oust 3,000 Federal Employees

Declares Departments Are Overmanned and Underworked and Insists Washington Merchants Must Not Stand in Way of Nation's Welfare.

Dismissal of approximately one-tenth of the employees of the Federal government in Washington would be necessitated by the proposed addition of an hour to the working day, according to Representative William P. Borland, of Missouri, author of the plan. This would mean that approximately 3,000 employees would be thrown out of work.

"Theoretically, the addition of an hour would require the dismissal of one-eighth of the employees," said Mr. Borland last night, "but, in practice this proportion would prove to be about one-tenth, for the proposed plan would serve to take up the slack in the service, to eliminate per diem employees, temporary employees, and the present steady increase in force."

"I am of the opinion that all the Federal departments are overmanned and that the employees are underworked. There are too many cheap employees, employees who don't do a full day's work. As a result advancement is difficult and an employee has no guarantee that a good showing will result in just promotion. I would cut down the force, perhaps raising salaries in a few instances. It should be borne in mind, however, that Federal employees receive considerably higher salaries than employees doing similar work in private establishments."

"The added hour would result in increased efficiency in the Federal service. The contention that individual efficiency would be impaired by reason of the fatigue caused by the added hour is silly. It is so silly that it is not worth answering. No one ever claimed that eight hours was too long for a working day. Why, it would be a reflection upon them selves if the Federal employees should declare that they were not able to maintain their efficiency during an added hour. It would not only be a reflection, it would be a confession."

"If the Government employees want to protest against the plan I know of no more effective a means than by resigning. It is ridiculous for Federal employees here to protest against having themselves classified with Federal employees in other parts of the country, all of whom work eight hours a day. Why, they can't pull a thing like that here and get away with it. Federal employees throughout other parts of the land will raise their voices in protest with charges of discrimination."

"In 1910 President Taft announced that he intended to add an hour to the working day, but the protests of Washington merchants caused him to halt the plan. I can see that the merchants would be opposed to the plan, but the efficiency of the United States Government can't stand aside for the merchants of a single city."

## Athens Fearful Of Teuton Drive

French So Confident of Victory, However, No Plan for Retreat Made.

Special Cable to The Washington Herald.

Athens (via Berlin, Feb. 24), Feb. 24.—The political situation in Athens is now entirely governed by expectation of a great German-Bulgarian attack. There is a growing fear that in case of defeat the English and French will destroy the city.

The French seem confident of victory; so much so, in fact, that they have not completed a single line of retreat through Chalkidike.

King Constantine is imperturbable and the entire Greek army supports him. The King is to be seen everywhere, usually accompanied by the Queen and the princesses. Yesterday the united royal family attended a children's festival, where an ovation was given them.

## Teutons Promise Poles Autonomy

In Attempt to Win Support Are Said to Have Offered Independency.

Special Cable to The Washington Herald.

Petrograd, Feb. 24.—A striking feature of the debate in the Duma is the revelation of a German plan to win over the Poles by promise of an independent Polish state.

The scheme, as disclosed by a Polish correspondent, M. Mikulski, would provide for the incorporation of Posen and Luthania in the new state in return for a million strong, to fight Germany's battles.

The writer avers that Germany is prepared to cede Posen to the Poles in lieu of the Baltic and Petrograd provinces. It is also proposed to annex Lithuania and Heligoland to the Polish state.

## WILSON CALLS UPON NATION TO BACK HIM UP IN U-BOAT STAND

## Wilson Nails Flag to Mast in Letter

The White House late last night gave out the following letter, which the President yesterday sent to Senator William J. Stone, his spokesman in the Senate:

THE WHITE HOUSE.

Washington, Feb. 24, 1916.

My Dear Senator:

I very warmly appreciate your kind and frank letter of today, and feel that it calls for an equally frank reply.

You are right in assuming that I shall do everything in my power to keep the United States out of war. I think the country will feel no uneasiness about my course in that respect. Through many anxious months I have striven for that object, amidst difficulties more manifold than can have been apparent upon the surface; and so far I have succeeded. I do not doubt that I shall continue to succeed. The course which the central European powers have announced their intention of following in the future with regard to undersea warfare seems for the moment to threaten insuperable obstacles, but its apparent meaning is so manifestly inconsistent with explicit assurances recently given me by those powers with regard to their treatment of merchant vessels on the high seas that I must believe that explanations will presently come which will put a different aspect upon it. We have had no reason to question their good faith or their fidelity to their promises in the past, and I, for one, feel confident that we shall have none in the future.

But, in any event, our duty is clear. No nation, no group of nations, has the right, while war is in progress, to alter or disregard the principles which all nations have agreed upon in mitigation of the horrors and sufferings of war; and if the clear rights of American citizens should very unhappily be abridged or denied by any such action, we should, it seems to me, have, in honor, no choice as to what our own course should be.

For my own part, I cannot consent to any abridgment of the rights of American citizens in any respect.

The honor and self-respect of the nation is involved. We covet peace, and shall preserve it at any cost but the loss of honor. To forbid our people to exercise their rights for fear we might be called upon to vindicate them would be a deep humiliation indeed. It would be an implicit—all but an explicit—acquiescence in the violation of the rights of mankind everywhere and of whatever nation or allegiance.

It would be a deliberate abdication of our hitherto proud position as spokesmen, even amidst the turmoil of war, for the law and the right.

It would make everything this government has attempted and everything that it has accomplished during this terrible struggle of nations meaningless and futile.

It is important to reflect that in this instance we allowed expediency to take the place of principle, the door would inevitably be opened to still further concessions. Once accepted a single abatement of right and many other humiliations would certainly follow, and the whole fabric of international law might crumble under our hands, piece by piece. What we are contending for in this matter is of the very essence of the things that have made America a sovereign nation. She cannot yield them without conceding her own impotency as a nation and making virtual surrender of her independent position among the nations of the world.

I am speaking, my dear Senator, in deep solemnity, without heat, with a clear consciousness of the high responsibilities of my office, and as your sincere and devoted friend. If we should, unhappily, differ, we shall differ as friends; but where issues as momentous as these are involved we must, just because we are friends, speak our minds without reservation.

Faithfully yours,

WOODROW WILSON.

Fire in Erie Shops.

Port Jervis, N. Y., Feb. 24.—Fire partially destroyed the shops of the Erie Railroad here today.

Visit New Orleans. Mobile, Pensacola During Mardi Gras. Low round-trip fares, Feb. 25 to Mar. 8. Through sleeping cars. Southern Ry., 705 15th st., N. Y.

## COUNTRY'S HONOR AT STAKE, AVERS PRESIDENT IN NOTE

Writes Senator Stone That His Purpose Is Unalterable---Concession Means Humiliation

## "HAS NO CHOICE IN MATTER"

"Can Consent to No Abridgement of Right Of American Citizens," Executive Says Regarding the German Warning

President Wilson has uttered a clear call to the country to support him against the effort that is being made in Congress to abridge the rights of Americans to travel the high seas.

The President declares that such a yielding as is now proposed by the leaders of the revolt in Congress will amount to conceding the impotency of this nation and of surrendering the independent position of the United States among the governments of the world.

President Wilson set forth these remarkably strong sentiments in a letter to Senator Stone, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which was made public last night. This letter breathes a deep determination on the part of the President to stand unflinchingly for every right now possessed by an American citizen, and in its firmness it surpasses even the most exaggerated accounts of the President's attitude as outlined by him to leaders of Congress at the recent White House reception.

LETTER BREATHE HOPEFULNESS.

At the same time, the letter shows that the President is still hopeful of obtaining an amicable settlement of the submarine controversy and that he is confident of his ability to keep the country out of war.

In the communication he serves notice on Congress that he will refuse to consent to the abridgment of a single right now possessed by American citizens.

"We covet peace and shall preserve it at any cost, but the loss of honor," was one of the impressive sentences in the Wilson letter.

The President declares that for the United States to yield to an abridgment of the rights of its citizens as regards armed merchantmen would be a "humiliation," and would amount to an acquiescence in a violation of the rights of all mankind. He declares further that such action would make everything that this government has attempted and achieved "meaningless."

WOULD BEGIN HUMILIATION.

The President predicts that if a surrender is made of the right to travel on armed merchantmen it will be but the beginning of further humiliations for the United States, and will threaten the fabric of international law throughout the world.

The President takes occasion in this letter to express for the first time his confidence in the good faith and fidelity of the German government in regard to the promises already made.

The making public of the President's letter to Senator Stone came as the climax to another day which had seen much excitement among members of Congress and a growing determination among Democratic leaders in the House to put through legislation warning Americans from belligerent liners regardless of the President's opposition.

HOUSE REVOLT STRONGER.

The revolt in the House continued to give evidence of its strength notwithstanding the fact that assurances were given by the administration that the situation with Germany had improved. Both Secretary Lansing and other members of the Cabinet were commissioned by the President to convey these assurances. The Democratic House leaders, however, were suspicious and because the details of the change were not forthcoming they continued their plans for bringing the President to terms.

Secretary Lansing later declined to throw any light on the assurances which he had given to Democratic leaders, but the impression in Washington was that the improvement consisted in the likelihood that Germany will postpone the effective date of her new submarine decree from March 1 to April 1, and that the United States will consent to discuss with the Berlin authorities the question of what constitutes defensive armament if Germany cares to raise it.

At the same time it became more apparent yesterday that the sudden flare-up in Congress had already had a damaging effect upon President Wilson's cause against Germany.

In German quarters the demonstration in Congress was accepted as convincing evidence that there could be no break between Germany and the United States. Leader Kitchin and Representative Flood of the Foreign Affairs Committee, to explain the situation. They waited for several hours without any satisfaction from the White House, and then left the Capitol. It developed later, however, that the President had retired to his library for the purpose of drafting his letter to Senator Stone, and had left strict instructions that he was not to be interrupted.

Washington was beginning yesterday to get some real light on the remarkable situation that has developed in Congress. There is no longer any doubt that the administration was intended for a time

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